Farmers' Union Information.

Conducted by the South Carolina Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union.

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LONG STAPLE COTTON.

About one year ago our Farmers' Union Bureau gathered in and reshed over a lot of different experiments among cotton growers of South Carolina on the subject of growing upland long staple cotton, which pointed out the following facts as a general conclusion:

Many farmers that planted Floradora and other varieties of long cotton in narrow rows and close to the drill like the usually grow common cotton on thin or average lands, made failures. Sometimes not getting over half as much long cotton as they did short cotton on same land and same treatment.

Success in growing long cotton in upper half of South Carolina depends upon these important conditions of soil and system:

First—Deep plowed, rich soil that gives the best lint.

Second—In good lands, rows not less than five feet wide and not less than three feet in drill.

Third—If commercial manure is used, put in no amoniated fertilizer (acid and potash only) when preparing the bed for the row.

Fourth—Apply nitrate of soda in every other middle row when cotton is nearly half grown and the other half nitrate soda in other middles when giving last plowing.

Fifth—No rule as to the amount of fertilizers necessary can be given here without knowing the character of the different lands. This can be judged best by those acquainted with each plot of land and crops previously grown.

Sixth—Cultivation. Run weeder over rows every five or seven days if weather permits, until plants have three or four leaves, then thin out to stand using shallow running cultivators to a finish, never running more than twice to finish in each row, continuing cultivation until blooms appear.

Seventh—One clean hoeing at thinning time is all the hand hoeing we usually give cotton on lands where weeders and cultivators can be used just right. By this system we grew 2 70 pounds long seed cotton on our best plot last year, and averaged 1340 pounds seed cotton on the crop, averaging less than three pounds seed cotton to one of lint.

* * *

GINNING.

Pick out when good and dry and as clean as possible (long cotton is a little harder to pick) and store away in the seed for at least sixty days—longer is still better. This seasoning and waiting improves and increases both the quality and quantity of lint while the rush at the gins will be over and your ginner will then not mind running his gin slower, and as the gin saws by this time are worn smooth you may look for a first-class sample of lint, free from cutting and naps.

When your crop is baled ready for market your profits are only half won out. It is true that it takes sweat, labor and a good chance of common horse sense to make a good crop, most any common fool can do that much by applying the right rules. But it takes these days a powerful combination of will power and business management coupled with co operation among the growers of long staple cotton in the right way to save the profits for the growers. This is where the big thing comes in, the long cotton growing business is at present in the hands of organized business farmers, who by concert of action have forced speculators out and got from five to six cents for their cotton.

Significant Coincidence.

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WHEN FERTILIZERS SHOULD BE APPLIED.

As a general rule, which has but few exceptions, the greater part of the fertilizer should be applied to the soil before planting the crop it is intended to benefit. This rule is not only in accord with theoretical considerations, but is also abundantly sustained in actual practice, as shown by carefully conducted field experiments instituted for the express purpose of ascertaining the truth, says Hon. R. J. Redding, Director Georgia Experiment Station, Department of Agriculture, in Virginia-Carolina Fertilizer Almanac.

The theory underlying the rule is the fact that most of the ingredients composing a commercial fertilizer are not immediately soluble and available, but must undergo certain chemical changes in the soil before the plant food will be in the proper condition to be taken up by the roots of the plants. This is particularly true in regard to salts of potash, and in less degree to acid phosphate. It is a fact also, that some forms of potash, notably kainit, cause chemical changes in the condition of the plant food already present in a soil, whereby the before insoluble and non-available plant food is made ready in the soil, becomes available.

The organic substances which are largely used in the make up of commercial fertilizers for the purpose of supplying nitrogen to the plants—such as cotton-seed meal, dried blood, fish scrap, tankage, etc., also require time in which to undergo chemical decomposition and such change of form as will enable the roots to appropriate the nitrogen. Even sulphate of ammonia, a highly soluble chemical salt, which sometimes enters into the composition of a fertilizer in a very limited amount, must undergo a complete chemical decomposition in the soil before the plants can make any use of the nitrogen which it contains in the form of ammonia sulphate. This must be converted into nitrate, or nitrate of lime.

Nitrate of soda is the one chemical fertilizer salt that is immediately available, producing a very prompt effect when applied to a growing crop (and it should be applied to none other).

Acid phosphate and potash may be applied to the soil and bedded on from two to six weeks before planting time. It is claimed by some experts that potash salts may be applied with better results even several months before planting. A more practical and convenient rule, however, is to apply a complete fertilizer from one to three weeks before planting the crop, when the latter is a corn, cotton, tobacco, or other summer-growing crop, always taking care to mix the fertilizer thoroughly with the soil of the open bedding furrow in which it shall be applied and then "listing," or drawing two furrows on it.

Experiments on the farm of the Georgia Experiment Station, projected for the purpose of comparing on the one hand the effectiveness of a complete fertilizer applied two weeks before planting, and, on the other hand, the effectiveness of the same quantity of the same fertilizer applied in the furrows with the seed, were followed by an unexpected and surprising result—viz., the cotton seeds planted on the plats in which the fertilizer had been applied and bedded on two weeks before, came up quicker and gave a more uniform stand of more vigorous plants than resulted on the plats in which the fertilizer was applied in the furrow with the seeds. While this result was not contemplated, it was quickly explained by the fact that the fertilizer that had been in the ground two weeks had undergone the chemical changes already alluded to, and its plant food was ready for the immediate wants of the young plant.

This result suggests that it may be expedient, in any case, to apply a small quantity—say 20 to 25 pounds—of nitrate of soda in the same furrow with the cotton or corn seeds, which may be done with perfect safety with cotton seed and without danger to corn if not placed in immediate contact with the seed.

APPLYING FERTILIZER AT THE TIME OF PLANTING.

This may be understood to mean either applying the fertilizer, bedding on it and immediately planting the seed; or it may refer to the practice of putting the fertilizer in the furrow with the seed. In the latter case, there is always a manifest danger that the coming growing season may be unusually dry, in which event the fertilizer, being so lightly covered may not be dissolved and properly disseminated through the soil. It may also follow that the fertilizer being so concentrated—en masse, as it were—around the tender rootlets of the young plants that the latter may be injured, or "burned"—a not inconsiderable danger. The plan is not advisable except when a very light application is to be made per acre. This caution is especially applicable to seeds that are planted in very shallow furrows and but lightly covered, such as cotton, and it is generally safer to interpose some soil, or, better, deposit the fertilizer in one furrow and plant the seed in a furrow immediately beside; or, vice versa, plant the seeds first in the furrow and then the fertilizer in a furrow close beside it. But the preferred plan is to bed on the fertilizer, and then plant the seeds, after harrowing down the beds.

I have often applied 50 to 100 pounds of a "complete" fertilizer per acre in the furrow with the cotton seeds; but it was "away back" in the late sixties and early seventies when fertilizers sold at $80 to $100 a ton, and very light applications were supposed to be in the interest of a wise economy. We did not know much about fertilizers in those days, and were afraid to "put too much guano on the cotton." That time has passed and gone, and the up-to-date farmer has found that 400 to 600 pounds of fertilizer for cotton (a properly balanced high-grade fertilizer) each acre of cotton is not dangerously excessive, but simply liberal and judicious. Indeed, it is a question of simple arithmetic. If 100 pounds per acre is profitable, and it costs no more labor to cultivate an acre with 500 pounds of applied fertilizer, then why not increase the amount invested in fertilizers, and if thought advisable, reduce the area and the labor account?

Now, the well-informed farmer only wants to know if the fertilizer be properly balanced for the crop he wishes to grow, and is sold at a fair price, and he invests liberally, just as he would do in buying anything at such a price that he may sell at a profit of from 50 to 100 per centum and upward. A high-grade, honest fertilizer will meet this requirement.

There is another justification for the practice of applying fertilizers at the time of planting—viz., when the farmer has failed to put in his order at the proper time. He may then, according to the proverb—"better late than not at all"—put in the fertilizer with the seed, or at the time of planting.

Pickens Circuit.

Following is the plan of the different hours of preaching at the various churches on the Pickens circuit:

Pickens—Second Sunday, 11.15 a. m; first, 7 p. m.

Porter's Chapel—First Sunday 11 a. m.

Bethlehem—Third Sunday, 11 a. m.; fourth, 11 am.

Talor—Fourth Sunday, 3 p. m.

Twelve Mile—Second Sunday, 3 p. m; third, 3 p. m.

D. D Jones, P. C.

NORTH PICKENS CIRCUIT.

Following is the plan of the different hours of preaching services on the North Pickens circuit:

Friendship—First Sunday, 11 a. m.

New Hope—First, 3 p. m.

Mt. Bethel—Second, 11 a. m.

Salem—Second, 3 p. m.

Gap Hill—Third, 11 a. m.

Fairview—Third, 3 p. m.

McKinney's Chapel—Fourth, 11 a. m.

S. P. McCarty, P. C.

First Sign of Spring.

Distant yet the violet,
Bluebirds fear the storm,
But the college baseball team
Has begun to forge,

—[N. Y. Sun.